

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani  
Committee on Education

LATE

From: Janina M. Martin, MSW  
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Support of GM 785 appointment of Ann M. Tom to the Early Learning Advisory Board

My name is Janina Martin and I currently serve as an Early Childhood Education instructor at the Honolulu Community College. I submit this testimony as an individual citizen, but mention my position as it relates to my deeply held value that the support of early childhood efforts in the State of Hawai'i are paramount to building healthy communities and the future of Hawai'i.

I am submitting testimony in full support of GM 785 for the appointment of Ann M. Tom to the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB). This board continues to move the issues of Early Childhood Education forward in the State as it advises the Office of Early Learning as well as departments within the State on issues surrounding the individual needs of various settings where early childhood care and education is currently occurring, the merits of quality initiatives as they pertain to early childhood as well as suggestions and proposals on policy.

Ann M. Tom has extensive knowledge and experience in working within the early childhood field and system. Not only has she been a child care provider herself, she has held the position of coordinator and administrator of the Quality Care Program for over 10 years. This program provides licensed home care providers with much needed support, education and resources. Ann has worked tirelessly to promote quality in her work with individual home based programs through developing the Quality Care Program materials and working collaboratively with partner agencies on ways to improve outreach. Ann is also the only locally based trained observer for the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accrediting body and she is serving a three year appointment on the NAFCC Accreditation Council. She has a keen awareness of the national trends as well as issues specific to those affecting care providers in Hawai'i.

The State of Hawai'i is one of 13 states in the nation that does not currently have a comprehensive plan for early childhood education. There have been many efforts over the last 30 years here to find ways to combine forces and bring together all agencies and programs that work to support families of children from birth through age eight. Our early childhood community currently relies on ELAB and groups such as the Action Strategy Coalition to assure early childhood education remains at the forefront in efforts to assure high quality and the availability of care and education for our youngest citizens.

I urge you to appoint Ann M. Tom to ELAB as we need people who serve on this board to have a strong analytical and research background as well as a broad knowledge base around the systems issues. However, we also need people who have worked in the field and personally know individuals who are currently changing practices to achieve high quality care for keiki and families. Ann is this candidate and I believe she will be a strong advocate for quality and best practices if appointed.

Sincerely,



Janina M. Martin